

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: November 12, 2015

Agenda Item: Threemile Wildlife Management Area Antrim Donation/Addition

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

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Background

FWP proposes to accept a donation of fee-title ownership of approximately 214.8 acres adjoining Threemile Wildlife Management Area (WMA), northeast of Stevensville (see map). The acreage was bequeathed to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in the last will and testament of Ms. Priscilla Antrim. This property shares approximately 1.5 miles of common boundary with the WMA, and 0.90 miles of boundary with a National Forest parcel between the Antrim property and the WMA. It contains open grassland, timber, and riparian habitat, including a small unnamed drainage and a portion of Threemile Creek. There are no developments on the property except for a segment of Forest Road 640, which is maintained by Ravalli County and the US Forest Service.

The primary benefit of acquiring this property would be the preservation of elk and mule deer winter range habitat that is contiguous with the WMA, and the ability to avoid subdivision development in a location where impacts from development would be significant. The property would be managed as part of the WMA for wildlife habitat and compatible public recreation.

Public Involvement Process & Results

FWP has not sought any public comment at this time. Upon endorsement from the Commission, FWP would conduct further negotiations with the landowner's executors and complete appropriate analysis and public review processes to determine project feasibility.

Alternatives and Analysis

If FWP does not accept ownership of this parcel, it is likely the land would eventually be under new private ownership. Under the no action alternative, the land could be vulnerable to subdivision, potentially other development and public accessibility would be in jeopardy.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the Commission endorse this proposal and allow Region 2 to prepare an EA and conduct a public involvement process. This process would result in a more detailed description and analysis of the proposal, and would bring to light any issues from the public.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission endorse this donated addition to Threemile WMA, allowing FWP to conduct further analysis and associated public review.